

ABC International School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 16-19 January 2017

Lead Inspector: David Twist
Team Inspectors: Ann Marie Dimeck
Mike Hewlett

Age Group: 2-18
Report Published: Feb 2017
Report Reference Number: 1040



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent four days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust employs over 2,500 staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas must have an inspection report, which shows that their performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be registered on Edubase.

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

The Standards are as follows:

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others.
7. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
8. The quality of provision for boarding.
9. Leadership and management of the school.

The purposes of the inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Proportions used in the report

90–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
75–90%	Very large majority, most
65–74%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none/very few

Information about the school

The Anglophone British Curriculum International School (ABCIS) was established in 1995 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It is a medium sized, multinational, mixed, non-denominational day school for both first and additional language English-speaking pupils from two to 18 years of age. Most pupils speak little or no English when they enter the school. Set on three sites, the school offers a UK curriculum, adapted to local needs and requirements and delivered in English. This begins with early years foundation stage (EYFS), followed by the English National Curriculum in key stages 1 to 3, leading to International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and A level examinations.

There are 766 pupils on roll and over 30 nationalities are represented, but Asian pupils form by far the largest group. The school's mission is 'to create an excellent teaching and learning environment, so that all may realise their full potential'. It also hopes to ensure that pupils benefit both from being in Vietnam, and from 'learning alongside adults and students from many parts of the world.'

The school currently has full membership of a number of educational organisations. These include The Federation of British International Schools in South and East Asia (FOBISIA) and the Council of British International Schools (COBIS). When they leave school, almost all students go on to study at universities in a number of countries. The most common destinations include the UK, USA, Australia and Korea.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The provisional date of the inspection was agreed several months ahead. The date was confirmed six weeks in advance of the inspection, following the school's completion of the 'request for

information' booklet. This document stated that in the school's view, it met the requirements of the BSO standards. The inspection team was given access to extensive information about the school in advance of the inspection. In total, inspectors visited 55 lessons or parts of lessons and held 22 meetings, including those with staff, parents and carers, the school's owners and talked with representative groups of pupils. Inspectors also observed the daily running of the school and, as well as looking at pupils' work, they examined improvement planning, self-evaluation, assessment and tracking systems, and safeguarding procedures.

Inspectors also analysed the responses to parent questionnaires returned to the school, and followed up on any issues that were raised.

Evaluation of the school

The ABCIS is an outstanding school. Using a British-style curriculum, adjusted to take full advantage of its Vietnamese context, it achieves high academic results and promotes excellent progress in all age groups.

Most pupils arrive speaking and understanding little or no English. However, the school is very successful in developing pupils' language and literacy skills to the point where they can access fully the rich curriculum on offer. At age 16, IGCSE results are very strong across all subjects, compared with similar schools taking the same examinations. Most pupils now stay on for A levels, where equal success has been achieved and maintained with most students exceeding their ambitious targets.

Children in the **early years** (pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception classes) make outstanding progress. From their varied starting points, most meet or exceed the expected level of attainment of the Early Learning Goals in their personal and social development, physical development, understanding the world, expressive arts and design, and mathematics.

Almost all children are learning to speak English as an additional language when they join the school. Consequently, their levels of attainment in communication and language and in literacy are lower than those found in other areas of the curriculum. The school has created a language-rich environment across the early years. Children are immersed in high quality English and have numerous opportunities to practise their newly acquired language skills as, for example, when they engage in role-play. By the time they leave their Reception class, most children are able to listen attentively in a range of situations and anticipate what might be coming next in a story that is being read. Some children, who make even faster progress, demonstrate good phonic knowledge, write recognisable phrases and understand simple sentences as they read out passages from their favourite stories.

From their very first days in pre-Nursery, children show an interest in, and are curious about, numbers. Many soon recognise numbers up to five and count out places for their friends. They regularly use mathematical language in their role-play as, for example, when they discuss the size of the dinosaur with 'its long tail and short legs'. By the time they leave Reception, most children are confident in counting to 20 and beyond. Many are starting to solve problems involving doubling and halving and can recognise, create and describe patterns they find around them.

A rich variety of physical activity including swimming, dance and physical education (PE), allows children to develop good physical control, coordination and fine motor skills. The wide range of planned tasks enables children to develop a growing awareness of the world around them as they experiment with the use of their senses and learn about their families and community.

Pupils' attainment in **English** at the end of primary, secondary and at post-16 is outstanding. Almost all make rapid progress from their various starting points.

Pupils build their language skills and knowledge through the primary years and seize every opportunity to write for real purposes and audiences. For example, Year 4 pupils write persuasively to the Head of School to explain why they need an extra playtime each day. By the end of primary, pupils' fluency and interest in reading develop through guided reading books and exposure to a broad range of literary genres. They successfully apply their knowledge of grammar to write creatively and are confident to spell challenging or unfamiliar words.

By the end of the secondary phase, pupils' achievements in public examinations place them among the best schools internationally and they compare favourably with independent schools in the UK. For example, pupils' IGCSE results in 2016 for English literature exceeded world averages by a large margin; 33% of ABC pupils achieved an A* grade compared to the world average of 26%. In addition, 87% of pupils achieved A*-C against a world picture of 71%.

Pupils are perceptive and articulate, and express their opinions with confidence, employing a wide range of vocabulary. Their understanding of literary texts is impressive. In Year 11, for example, pupils are able to evaluate the way in which the English author, Michael Frayne, introduces multiple themes to the reader in his psychological novel, 'Spies'. Written work is equally strong; persuasive and fluent sentence structure and syntax are embedded early and grow in sophistication with each year.

Fewer students study English at post-16 but those who do achieve outstanding results in their A level examinations. For example, in 2016, all the students who sat the examination, met or exceeded their targets, with 70% of the cohort achieving an A grade. The current Year 13 students are well on track to achieve similarly impressive results. The work of these students is characterised by their ability to absorb new ideas very quickly and challenge each other, and their teachers, with extremely perceptive argument.

Pupils' attainment in **mathematics** at the end of primary, secondary and post-16 is outstanding. They make excellent rates of progress during their time in school.

Throughout the primary years, pupils become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics through frequent and varied practice so that they develop the ability to recall rapidly and accurately.

In Year 2, almost all pupils can add numbers with up to three digits using formal written methods of column addition. All areas of mathematics are covered during pupils' time in the primary phase. For example, in Year 5 pupils can compare and classify geometric shapes based on their properties and sizes. By the end of primary, almost all pupils can use a range of calculation strategies involving integers, decimals and negative numbers to solve problems. They are very well prepared to build on their mathematical knowledge in readiness for their next stage of education.

These outstanding rates of progress continue across key stage 3 and key stage 4 as evidenced in every measure at IGCSE. For example, in 2016, 46% of pupils achieved A* grades at IGCSE compared to world averages of 16.8%. In addition, 73% achieved A*/A compared to world averages of 35%.

In secondary, pupils build on their learning from primary and develop fluency, mathematical reasoning and competence in solving increasing sophisticated problems. In Year 9, pupils solve linear and simultaneous equations using substitution and, in Year 11, they use upper and lower bounds in calculation.

In post-16, attainment and progress in mathematics are outstanding, as illustrated by senior students' ability to explore De Moivre's theorem. In 2016, the students' performance at A level exceeded worldwide performance at every level. Although only 16 students sat the examination, nine achieved A*/A. This trend is on track to continue with the current Year 13 students who have developed into outstanding mathematicians.

Attainment in **science** is outstanding overall across the school. From a good progress picture in lower primary, pupils accelerate in their knowledge, understanding and scientific skills throughout the primary phase. By Year 6, a very large majority are performing above the expected level. The primary science curriculum is challenging and engages pupils' interest. For example, in Year 2, in their natural world theme, pupils consider how animals adapt to harsh environments. One child observed: 'The seal's fur must be very thick to keep out the freezing water.' Older primary pupils develop effective investigation skills and demonstrate understanding of how their science topics relate to the real world. When drawing schematic circuit diagrams before going on to build them, pupils could explain where wires would be hidden in the class lighting and power circuits and why electricians needed to use symbols to follow electrical installations.

Rapid progress continues through secondary classes, as pupils are prepared for the examination years. Pupils in Year 9, for example, show a thorough understanding of photosynthesis and transpiration systems in their plant studies. In their IGCSE examinations, pupils have performed consistently well. Latest results show that the school exceeded world averages in biology, chemistry and physics by a substantial margin. In chemistry, for example, 63% achieved either A* or A grades. In post-16 classes, work is heavily focused on examination preparations and students are directed effectively to strategies that will help them achieve the best results. Year 12 biology students, for example, were developing their microscope skills by identifying features of unknown plant stem samples in preparation for their practical paper. This attention to detail, together with the prior knowledge that students can draw upon, has resulted in outstanding A level results, particularly in physics and chemistry where most entrants attained A* and A grades.

Attainment in other subjects is equally high and pupils achieve outstanding results in most subjects. In 2016, pupils' overall achievement at both IGCSE and A level was at the highest level yet, continuing a trend of strong performance. Over the last two years, examination results have been particularly high in French, Mandarin, music, design technology, economics and business studies and art, where almost all students were awarded A* or A grades.

- **Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:**
- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Standard 1 below).

- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Standard 1 below). Realignment of the assessment systems to reflect the recently raised expectations in the UK is fully underway, but not yet complete.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Standard 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Standard 3 below).
- The Standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Standard 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the Standard (see Standard 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this Standard (see Standard 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the Standard (see Standard 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Standard 9 below)

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during January 2017, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government, quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and is valid for a period of three years.

Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the requirements of this Standard.

The school's curriculum is outstanding, and all BSO requirements are met, including those for personal, health and social education (PHSE).

All required curriculum policies are in place, and the school has taken account of the recent changes in the UK curriculum; as a result, pupils are able easily to enter or re-enter the UK system.

The curriculum provides excellent breadth and balance, both within the formal lesson timetable and in outside activities such as the extra-curricular programme, educational visits, service activity and work experience.

Leaders regularly review the curriculum and listen to the views of parents, colleagues and pupils. This has resulted in the introduction of A level Chinese and business studies, following requests from these groups.

Specialist staff are employed to support PE, French, music, Chinese and swimming and the value of their expertise is evident in the high standards achieved in these subjects. Specialists not only bring their subject expertise to enhance the learning experience for pupils, but also share their expertise with interested colleagues.

There is an extensive and exciting range of extra-curricular activities across all areas of the school, which allows pupils to pursue their individual talents and interests. The Model United Nations is the most popular extra-curricular activity and enables pupils to take part in city-based and regional conferences, developing their confidence and maturity.

The rich and stimulating curriculum is enhanced further with activities and events, both in school and regionally, for pupils to apply their subject knowledge in pursuits, which they find interesting and relevant. There are many examples across the school including science week, book week, creative arts week, the COBIS poetry and science competitions plus Ho Chi Minh City mathematics competitions. These events not only provide further reinforcement of all core curriculum skills, but also have a positive impact on pupils' social skills, self-esteem and maturity.

The school ensures that all pupils make equally outstanding progress including those few who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the most able and those learning English as an additional language. Staff provide extra support, where required, and planning is suitably matched to each individual's needs. The English as an additional language programme is a key element of the whole school English immersion policy, which enhances the development of pupils' English language skills. The success of this programme is illustrated by the rapid return to mainstream classes by pupils who experience it.

The school has a well-planned programme for PSHE to promote each pupil's personal development. In the secondary department, PHSE has experienced an improved profile over the last year. The impact is evident in the excellent relationships and interactions found at all levels across the school.

Careers advice is built into the PHSE curriculum and pupils are provided with a variety of resources to help them to consider carefully decisions about the next steps in their lives. Work experience in Year 11 encourages pupils to become curious about a wide range of career options. In Years 12 and 13, events including university fairs support students well in the university application process, particularly for UK universities.

Transition at all phases is a notable strength of the school with a variety of taster days, meetings, and information sessions for parents. As a result, there is little regression in standards when pupils move from one phase to another and very few issues with pupils 'settling in'.

Secondary students learn about nuances of international law by participating in regular Model United Nations events; specific social and political aspects of British and other countries are learnt through humanities. Pupils have insights into public life in Vietnam and age-appropriate levels of general knowledge about society in the UK and internationally.

Although truly international, pupils absorb a British ethos in subjects such as English where Shakespeare, and a number UK authors are used as a focus for study. Harry Potter books rank among the pupils' favourites, and the debating society is a popular extra-curricular activity. **The overall quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding** across the school. This enables pupils to make very rapid progress in acquiring knowledge, increasing understanding

and developing their skills. As a result, standards are extremely high in all subject areas, and pupils learn very well.

Successful recruitment has ensured that teachers are well qualified and have excellent subject knowledge. They plan lessons in detail, often involving a variety of tasks and activities at a level well suited to meet the needs of the different abilities represented in each of the classes. Lessons and learning activities are purposeful, have clear objectives and provide pupils with just the right level of challenge.

Teachers make excellent use of a wide range of resources, including computers, to support and enhance learning when appropriate. For example, Year 5 pupils were able to utilise their research skills to find out about famous and, in some cases, infamous people in history. Teachers know pupils very well, and this enables them to tailor activities and questions very closely to the individual needs of each pupil, including the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent. They are characterised by a culture of mutual trust and respect. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils, and pupils respond accordingly and are very highly motivated. 'Our teachers want the very best for us here, which is why lessons and learning are fun', is typical of the comments made by pupils in their meetings with inspectors.

Pupils listen attentively and engage very positively with all learning activities in the classroom and beyond. They take pride in their work, both in its quality and in the way it is presented. Pupils are perceptive and thoughtful and, as they grow older, are well able to develop and articulate responses to challenging questions and problems, both individually and as part of a group or team. At post-16, for example, where many of the classes are smaller, a tutorial-based approach enables teachers to stretch the most able students to thinking at undergraduate level. Many students are capable of seeing the bigger picture and are skilled at making links between seemingly disparate and unconnected information or ideas.

Teachers regularly assess pupils' work. They use this information well to plan activities that challenge pupils to improve still further. Pupils value both oral and written feedback and evidence in books and in discussions with pupils demonstrate that most take note of, and act on, the advice they have been given. In response to changing curriculum expectations and assessment systems in the UK, the school is in the process of introducing revised procedures to complement already rigorous tracking systems. These more closely monitor pupils' attainment and progress against the targets they have been set. The school readily accepts that this is not the 'finished article'. There is more work to do, particularly if the school is to align the expectations and recording systems between departments and phases. For example, during this transitional period, some subjects still measure pupils' progress against old national curriculum levels while others do not.

Most teachers are UK trained and have relevant experience of teaching in schools in the UK. The styles of teaching, learning and assessment at ABC are closely aligned with those of high performing independent schools in the UK. Consequently, they provide an excellent preparation for pupils to enter or re-enter the UK educational system at the appropriate level.

Standard 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school meets the requirements of this Standard. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Behaviour is exemplary both during the school day and at break and lunch times. In lessons, pupils are eager to learn and exhibit positive learning attitudes. They enjoy taking responsibility for their own learning as well as supporting each other.

The school has been successful in developing an open and safe learning environment where pupils feel confident to express their views and practice moral decision making, for example the mistreatment of black bears harvested for bile, and the killing of African rhinos.

Pupils take responsibility for their actions, in particular over their care of the environment. At the request of pupils, recycling bins are now sited in the school.

Respect from pupils for their teachers and each other is evident and the highly positive relationships are a noticeable feature of the school. This was highlighted at a meeting with inspectors, when pupils spoke of the school's family centred, friendly ethos, as pupils know each other well and look out for each other. The expectation that pupils will show empathy and tolerance to each other is embedded in the school's culture. Pupils all agree that this contributes significantly to their success and is a significant strength of the school.

There are numerous opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles both in the primary and secondary department. These include house captains, and the school council, who are elected through a democratic process by their peers, and the Key Stage 1 and 2 student council who are responsible for managing a variety of playground games. Pupils are proud to take on positions of responsibility and recognise that they contribute to the smooth running of their school and to fostering a community of caring learners.

Pupils are actively engaged in supporting a wide range of charities. Pupils apply the skills learnt in business studies to enterprise schemes, which raise money for charity, one of the most successful being the international family day. Links with the local community groups do not just consist of financial support but also include opportunities to carry out active service in a local school and orphanage, where pupils plan and deliver activities to the children. This link, with the less fortunate in the community, is an aspect of school life that pupils value greatly.

The wide range of extra-curricular activities, most noticeably in performing arts and sport, provides pupils with an opportunity to find something at which they can excel and so develop their gifts and talents.

Cultural appreciation week and United Nations day are annual events which help pupils to respect, understand and appreciate the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life.

Pupils at ABC talk with pride about their school. They are proud of its family-centred, friendly ethos, compassion for the less fortunate, care and support from staff who always go the extra mile, and the pursuit of academic excellence.

Standard 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school meets the requirements of this Standard.

The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding. The school has a range of policies, which are subject to ongoing review, that make clear the responsibilities of all staff to protect its pupils. Detailed records are kept for admissions and attendance and effective systems are in place to follow up when pupils are absent. Pupils are supported well when they arrive in school. For example, in the early years, strong relationships develop between teachers and parents. This helps children to settle quickly into school routines and enjoy their learning. Levels of attendance are high. Pupils arrive on time and are punctual to lessons.

Parents rightly have every confidence that their children are educated in a very safe environment. There is a detailed behaviour policy, which includes references to anti-bullying, over which the school has a zero tolerance. Expectations of good behaviour are known and understood by everyone in the school. Pupils understand how their behaviour can affect others and are motivated by the use of house points. Suitable records are kept on the rare occasions when sanctions are imposed. Pupils are always supervised well and the school is secure with good control of entrance and exit points. There is a high level of vigilant staffing throughout the school day. Pupils commented very positively about the steps taken by their teachers to look after them.

The school keeps a close watch on all matters relating to safety, both in school and when pupils are out on visits. Health and safety walks are a regular activity of the designated senior staff. Regular and relevant risk assessments are undertaken as a matter of course. No visits can be booked unless detailed risk assessments have been approved by school leaders. All appropriate checks are taken in relation to fire regulations and the quality of water. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and the school records meticulously any aspects that need to be improved. All PE staff are well trained and additional lifeguards ensure that there is safe swimming.

The school follows rigorous procedures for ensuring child protection. There is a named child protection officer in the school and he ensures regular training is included for all staff. This is often undertaken online so that it reflects the best and most recent of UK practice. Staff are required to sign their commitment to supporting the school's child protection policies. Very careful attention is given to ensuring that all staff are suitable to work with children and all relevant checks are undertaken as expected in the UK and required in Vietnam.

Procedures for managing accidents and first aid are excellent. The school has two full-time nurses who ensure that medicines are stored safely and that pupils receive suitable care when

needed. Records are kept confidentially and parents are kept well informed if medical issues arise.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this Standard.

In connection with the senior leadership and administrative staff, the owners ensure that all adults who work with children have been appropriately vetted to ensure their suitability and right to work in Vietnam. Records reveal that recruitment systems are rigorous and secure.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this Standard.

Accommodation and resources are of good quality and meet all required local regulations. The three distinct sites are kept safe and secure by well-trained and conscientious security staff. The sites are clean and litter free with pupils taking a great pride in keeping them this way. Signing procedures and checks on visitors are conducted in a friendly but robust way. These reflect the attention given to keeping adults and children safe.

Staff and pupils work hard to create a stimulating and purposeful environment for learning. Buildings are maintained well and daily cleaning routines ensure high levels of hygiene. Washrooms are easily accessible for pupils of all ages and the separate changing facilities with showers for boys and girls at both swimming pools provide privacy. There are sufficient outdoor areas for recreation and play with good shade available.

Outdoor areas are used well to extend the learning of younger pupils and children in the early years. The school prepares its own food on site and meets all the local hygiene and food preparation requirements.

Classrooms and well-equipped specialist rooms allow pupils to acquire knowledge and improve their skills. The spacious classrooms are well lit, ventilated and furnished with age-appropriate fittings, which are in good condition. The design technology area, devoted to practical work, has limited space and is only suitable for small, well-supervised groups. The classrooms and corridors in the early years are used well to support children to make choices and learn through exploration and play.

The school libraries are well stocked. There is a full-time, trained librarian, whose expert services are greatly appreciated by staff and pupils who use the library frequently. The success of the library provision is illustrated by the love of reading found in all parts of the school. Computers add to resources for research that are available in the libraries.

Resources in classrooms are plentiful, well managed and suitably deployed. They include interactive whiteboards, tablet computers, books and other materials which support learning for all pupils.

Displays around the school celebrate pupils' success, are often thought-provoking and motivate

others to be curious and to learn. They celebrate both the heritage and culture of Vietnam and British culture, history, way of life and literature.

Plans for building the new secondary department are well advanced with the opening date set for August 2018. School leaders recognise that current buildings have few facilities for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Improvements in this area are planned for the opening of the secondary department.

Standard 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school meets the requirements of this Standard.

The provision of information for parents, carers or others is of high quality and comes through a number of channels. The school's website is informative and gives parents links to a range of useful information as well as contacts. A recent development is the parents' advisory group which has representatives of all year groups and is establishing itself as a conduit for parents' ideas and concerns. It recently raised questions about the capacity and operational effectiveness of the canteen, for example. The 'now and next' newsletters communicate diary events, and the Connect magazine keeps parents in touch with their children's achievements and with special topics such as the Year 8 project on diversity in the October issue. Competition news such as the FOBISIA creative coding event and examination results are also celebrated.

Most parents are satisfied that the school keeps them as informed as possible about the work their children are doing. Termly reports enable them to get a feel for the progress being made, with both current and target grades communicated. Some appreciate the school's caution in not overstating achievement as a means of avoiding any complacency on the pupils' part. Parent consultation opportunities are regular and involve pupils themselves. When discussing their children's welfare and progress with staff, parents say that the teachers know them very well. The use of pupils' homework diaries helps parents to be aware of expectations and provides older pupils with reminders of school policies and procedures.

Access to staff is seen as well organised and parents report that any occasional issues they might have are addressed speedily. They appreciate the headteacher's approachability. On occasions, some parents feel that letters sent in school bags can go astray, but acknowledge that key communications are often followed up by email. The school is currently negotiating contracts for an updated school information system and has plans in place for expanding its communication strategies, including the use of social media.

Events to explain academic options for Years 9 and 11 and transition arrangements for pupils approaching secondary age are valued by parents. The school tries hard to support parents who might want to know more about how to help their children. Coffee and croissant mornings, before the start of school, enable some who work outside the home to familiarise themselves with current topics.

Responses to the parents' survey were very high at around 90%. Most parents confirm that they are happy with the care shown to their children and with the quality of education they receive.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this Standard.

The school has a clear and accessible complaints' procedure. There is a logical chain of responsibility in place for handling complaints at all levels and the policy is translated into three languages to assist parents. Clear timelines are established for acknowledging and responding to complaints and an appeals' process is available in the event of dissatisfaction. Records indicate that complaints' procedures are very rarely used and the ease of access to senior staff ensures that most issues can be successfully addressed through informal channels.

Standard 8. The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

Standard 9. Leadership and management of the school

The school meets the requirements of this Standard.

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

The development of ABC into a school which seeks to promote academic excellence within a caring and nurturing environment is a direct result of the common vision shared by the owners, headteacher and senior staff. Their determination to preserve the special nature of the school, while developing its capacity and ensuring its continuing growth, has been fundamental to its success and popularity. Leaders at all levels are afforded the scope to contribute to the school's further development and, through a common approach to improvement planning, they take responsibility for implementing change. In early years, for example, the skilled leadership has led the alignment of the activities, skills and experiences on offer, with the latest UK curriculum expectations.

Effective governance by the owners makes a significant impact upon leadership quality. While retaining a sensible separation of roles and responsibilities, the owners, through their daily presence in the school, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All local legal, financial and safeguarding regulatory requirements are met and regular scrutiny of the school's performance ensures that the headteacher is held to account for standards, including through the use of an appraisal system. Initiatives suggested by leaders or staff are readily supported if they serve the interests of the school. For example, external venues to host the newly formed parents' advisory group were funded in order promote a better conduit of parents' opinions.

The distributive nature of ABC's leadership is illustrated by the well established 'aspect groups'. Representatives of all phases of the school come together to develop a range of initiatives such as 'green' environmental strategies or planning for the growth of technology. Senior leaders attend, but other staff chair the groups, thus drawing out increased leadership capacity and giving staff a chance to develop professionally. In tune with the school's policies, leaders at all levels are vigilant to ensure that any discrimination is tackled immediately and that equality is effectively promoted. The foundation of a girls' football club has been a very well received example.

The school is accurate and realistic in its self-evaluation. In judging its performance, leaders make comparisons with world examination averages and the results from other similar schools. They resist the temptation to be complacent, and the wealth of data and tracking information available is analysed to identify even small aspects for improvement. Resultant action planning is wide-ranging and ambitious. While the volume of this can seem overwhelming, it is shared on a need-to-know basis, so staff can focus on the specific priorities of their remit. Typical of the leadership's drive for every pupil to achieve their full potential, is the practice of setting ambitious and challenging academic targets.

The recruitment, deployment and development of staff are strengths of the school and underpin the high quality teaching, which serves the pupils so well. Once appointed, staff undertake an excellent induction programme to orientate them to ABC's values and protocols. Most are British trained and qualified, enabling them to teach the UK curriculum with confidence and prepare any pupil for entry or re-entry into the UK education system. Approaches to performance management are thorough and productive. Staff are regularly observed, engaged in professional reflection and, where necessary, offered appropriate training or mentoring to raise their standard to that of the best. In rare cases where performance falls short of expected standards, leaders are not slow to demand improvement and this helps maintain an outstanding overall level of teaching quality. Administrative and support staff are very efficient and their work enables ABC to function smoothly, and its teachers to focus upon the core business of learning.

Parents confirm the strength of the school's leadership and management. From discussions and their responses to the questionnaire, almost all agree that the school is well led.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

ABC International School fully meets the requirements for British Schools Overseas.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

1. In order to further improve its assessment systems, the school should:
 - align measuring and recording systems with the current expectations of the curriculum
 - ensure a consistency of approach between departments and phases.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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The quality of provision for boarding

	n/a			
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Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	✓			
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School details

Name of school	The Anglophone British Curriculum
Type of school	International School
Date school opened	1995
Age range of pupils	2-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time)	766
Number on roll (part time)	0
Annual fees (day pupils)	119,800,000VND to 460,400,000VND
Annual fees (boarders)	n/a
Address of school	21E Street, KDC Trung Son Binh Hung Binh Chanh Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam
Telephone number	0084 8 54311833
Email address	office@theabcis.com
Headteacher	Gary D Benfield
Proprietor	Le Bong Ha

GLOSSARY

Achievement – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

Accreditation – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

Accreditation Board – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

Assessment – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

Attainment – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO) – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

Education Development Trust – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

Central Support Team – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

Combined or Joint Visit – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

Cycle of Inspection – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

Curriculum – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

Leadership – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

Learning – Pupils' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

Management – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school's work in an efficient and useful way.

Ofsted – The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

Progress – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

School self-evaluation – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school's work on the outcomes for pupils.

Standards –

- (1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.
- (2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

Teaching – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils' learning.

With 40 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust exists solely to provide education for public benefit.

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train. As one of the top 30 charities in the UK, we work for and with individuals and communities in order to help them reach their potential.

Education Development Trust has built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services to national organisations such as Ofsted, the Teacher Training Agency and to schools in the north of England. Our main aim is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

Education Development Trust first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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Education Development Trust
16-18 Duke Street
Reading
RG1 4RU
UK

Report reference no: 1040